

KEEPING THE PROMISE TO OUR CHILDREN

*The Principles, Process and Policies
That Should Guide Florida
In Implementing Amendment 9*

A Joint Report by:

*Florida's Coalition to Reduce Class Size
&
People For the American Way*

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I. Introduction

In the months leading up to the Nov. 5 election, Florida engaged in an intense, spirited and informative debate over overcrowded classrooms in our public schools. The conversation prompted by Amendment 9, the initiative to reduce class sizes, actively engaged parents, civic and business leaders and other Floridians like never before and helped to renew citizens' resolve to ensure a quality education for all children. Advocates and opponents made their cases. The public considered the state's dismal national rankings on education—49th in high school graduation rates, 46th in SAT scores, and so forth.¹ In the end, the voters made their decision. A firm majority of more than 2.5 million voters spoke loudly and clearly last November: They want the Legislature to fund Amendment 9 and reduce class sizes in our public schools.²

Amendment 9 is an affordable mandate for reform that marks a historic turning point for our state, but the work is just beginning. After all, Floridians would be hard pressed to find a classroom that is any less crowded than it was on Election Day. *Now it's time for Florida's elected leaders to keep our promise to kids, abide by the will of the voters, and implement Amendment 9 as it was intended.*

Our elected leaders, regardless of party affiliation, must come together and carry out the will of voters to address the crisis of classroom overcrowding. Keeping faith with the voters on Amendment 9 will ensure that every child has a classroom environment that facilitates real learning. Moreover, keeping the promise will benefit our state in other ways, as the construction of more classroom space creates jobs and jump-starts our state's sluggish economy.

This document is intended to be a work in progress. As we share our initial recommendations for implementing Amendment 9, we will continue to seek ideas and feedback from parents, educators, the business community and elected officials.

II. The Co-Authors of this Report

The Coalition to Reduce Class Size (www.smallerclasses.org) is based in Tallahassee and was created to coordinate the campaign to amend the state constitution and, in doing so, help begin to make our public schools a top priority. A few years ago, disheartened to find that his daughter was in a kindergarten class with 34 students, Congressman Kendrick Meek—then a state senator—searched for answers. Unfortunately, the Legislature repeatedly defeated efforts to enact class-size reductions. Eventually, Meek recognized that real reform would require action by the people of Florida. The Coalition that he originally chaired has received an outpouring of support from students, parents, teachers, civic leaders, the faith community, business owners and others.

People For the American Way (PFAW) was a leading partner in the Coalition to Reduce Class Size, joining with the Coalition to co-author the signature report last year that educated voters and outlined the urgent need for Amendment 9. PFAW's 35,000 Florida members and activists played a major role in the grassroots campaign to approve the class-size initiative. PFAW is a national organization of 600,000 members and activists with offices in Miami and Tallahassee. For more than 20 years, PFAW has advanced civil rights, quality public education, civic participation and constitutional liberties. Interested persons can learn more about PFAW's extensive commitment to strengthening and improving public education for all children at: www.pfaw.org/education/quality.

III. Guiding Principles

For decades, studies have proven repeatedly that class-size reduction enhances student achievement. Smaller classes give students more individual attention and instruction, make our schools safer through improved discipline, maximize a class' ability to cover and understand in-depth content in less time, and facilitate the early identification of students with learning disabilities.

Parents also benefit from class-size reduction because teachers with smaller classes have fewer parents to reach and more time to inform parents of students' progress—as well as more time to develop quality relationships with students and parents. For teachers, smaller classes improve morale and professional satisfaction, and, therefore, improves teacher retention.

As policymakers follow through on voters' mandate to reduce class size, the following principles should guide these discussions:

Teacher Support – With the need to hire tens of thousands of new teachers, Florida must provide adequate support and professional development opportunities for these women and men. Providing this support will maximize the benefits of smaller classes and improve teacher retention.

Facility Support – A committee of teachers and administrators should be assembled within each school or school district to conduct a facility needs assessment, reviewing how existing space is used and what additional facilities, if any, are needed to comply with Amendment 9.

Program Evaluation – It is critical that Florida build into the implementation of Amendment 9 a research and evaluation component that enables policymakers and educators to measure the progress of implementing class-size reduction.

IV. Resolving Key Policy Questions

A. Definitions and Parameters

During the preliminary discussions about implementing Amendment 9 questions have come up about what the amendment actually requires. Following is a summary of the key questions that have arisen to date:

- ***What is the difference between pupil-teacher ratio and actual class size?*** Perhaps the most important issue with regard to definitions and requirements of the amendment concerns the distinction between pupil-teacher ratio and class size. Floridians voted to reduce “the maximum number of students who are assigned to each teacher”—meaning a ratio of one classroom teacher to a specific number of students in that classroom. Pupil-teacher ratio, on the other hand, is calculated by counting the total number of all students in a school and comparing this figure to the total number of teachers and other staff in that school. While administrators, librarians, counselors, teacher’s aides, reading specialists, media specialists and other staff play a critical role in our schools, counting these personnel and dividing it against the student body does not reflect class size. For this reason, the pupil-teacher data currently collected by the state (number of students measured against the entire staff) underestimates the extent of classroom overcrowding in our public schools.
- ***How should class size “averages” be determined?*** First and foremost, accurate data must be collected before a final recommendation can be acted on by the Legislature. A variety of data are needed, including:
 - the number of students in each classroom, by grade
 - the school average
 - the school average, by grade
 - the district average
 - the district average, by grade

Districts should rank their schools using this data and prioritize funds around those public schools that are most severely overcrowded.

- ***What is the definition of a classroom?*** A classroom is a permanent structure with one class and one teacher.
- ***What is the definition of a class?*** The amendment specifically exempts “extracurricular” classes such as physical education and chorus and should not apply to distance-learning classes.
- ***Will vouchers for private schools count toward compliance with Amendment 9?*** No. The pre-Nov. 5 debate over Amendment 9 focused considerably on the costs of constructing additional classrooms in *public* schools – and voters approved the amendment with this clear understanding. Trying to implement the amendment through a voucher program that utilizes private school classrooms would amount to a “bait and switch” that disrespects the intent of Florida voters. Vouchers wouldn’t be a viable alternative in any case due to a lack of capacity at private schools to accommodate the number of students necessary and the

considerable number of voucher students now returning to public schools. Furthermore, a cloud hangs over the future of the state's voucher programs in the wake of last year's circuit court ruling declaring the so-called A+ voucher program unconstitutional.

- ***Should charter schools be exempted from the class-size caps in Amendment 9?*** No. The voters who approved the class-size initiative intended for the amendment to benefit children in *all* public schools, which includes charter schools. There are 50,000 children attending charter schools in Florida.³ It would be wrong to deny these students smaller classes.
- ***Should approaches such as multi-tracking and block scheduling be used to implement Amendment 9?*** We believe it is best left to local school districts to determine if these last tier temporary options such as double sessions, rotating or block scheduling are viable for their communities.

B. Teacher Recruitment and Retention

One of the most impressive and encouraging effects of reducing class sizes is the way it facilitates a quality teaching environment. This is a crucial consideration for the state of Florida, which will need thousands of new teachers in the coming decade regardless of Amendment 9,⁴ and which could lose the invaluable experience of thousands of veteran teachers if the frustrations of dealing with overcrowded classes continue to drive them out of the system.

Even without Amendment 9, Florida will have to hire an estimated 160,000 teachers in the next ten years just to handle projected growth and keep class sizes where they are. It is estimated that Amendment 9 will require an additional 32,000 teachers.⁵

Princeton University's Alan Krueger recently explained: "Developing strategies to recruit and reward outstanding teachers is a complement to smaller classes, *not a substitute for them*." (emphasis added)⁶ Indeed, Amendment 9 will enhance the ability of school districts to attract men and women to the teaching profession – and keep them there. This is confirmed by the U.S. Department of Education's finding that smaller classes create working conditions that raise teachers' job satisfaction.⁷ The Educational Priorities Panel studied a class-size reduction program in New York City and found that the program, among other benefits, improved teacher morale.⁸

Perhaps most significantly, there is direct Florida-specific evidence that reducing class sizes would induce former teachers to return to the classroom. A state survey asked respondents to choose five out of 18 factors that would encourage them to return to teaching. Of the 18 factors, "smaller class size" came in second only to increased salaries. Smaller classes actually beat increased salaries among former math teachers. Smaller classes and increased salaries were the only factors cited by at least 60 percent of those surveyed.⁹

Recommendations:

- ***Increase the financial rewards of teaching*** – The single most important step toward improving Florida's ability to recruit and retain quality teachers is to provide pay and benefits that demonstrate that they are valued professionals. Salaries should be increased, and officials should explore other creative means, including underwriting loans for advanced degrees, to improve the broader rewards of teaching.

- ***Use class-size reduction as a major recruiting tool*** – Prospective teachers should be reminded that Florida is undertaking the boldest effort ever by any state to reduce class sizes. Knowing that our state is committing itself to improve the classroom learning environment can be an important consideration for the recruitment of new teachers.
- ***Enhance our capacity to train new teachers*** – While it is important to recruit quality teachers from other states, we should also focus on tapping into the talent available right here in Florida. One way to do that is to explore allowing all of the community colleges to offer teaching degrees just as Miami-Dade Community College does now.
- ***Explore additional use of alternative certification*** – Traditional teacher preparation programs are unlikely to meet the recruiting needs of Florida’s public schools.¹⁰ This makes it essential for the state to consider additional programs for alternative teacher certification. State officials should work cooperatively with the Florida Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, the Florida Education Association and other stakeholders to develop appropriately rigorous programs that produce qualified teachers who can help to meet the urgent needs of our public schools.
- ***Expand recruitment efforts to non-traditional candidates*** – Florida must reach out to school paraprofessionals, Peace Corps alumni and other non-traditional candidates who are often overlooked for the teaching profession. A recent report by the Urban Institute found that these teaching prospects, once certified, are less likely to leave the teaching profession.¹¹
- ***Encourage retiring teachers to remain in the classroom*** – Currently the Florida Retirement System forces retiring teachers to wait one year to return to the classroom. This restriction should be lifted so retiring teachers who have reconsidered and wish to return to the classroom can do so immediately. Such a change enables our public schools to continue to benefit from the skills of these experienced educators.
- ***Involve teachers in these efforts*** – No one better understands the factors that lead teachers to enter or leave the profession than the women and men who are currently in the classroom. Teachers and the organizations that represent them should play a critical role in shaping state recruitment efforts.

C. Creative and Cost-Effective Solutions with Limited Space

- ***Maximum utilization of existing space*** – A committee of teachers and administrators should be assembled within each school or school district to determine the most effective use of existing space and what other space may be available to use for classrooms. These committees should act prudently in identifying such space, respecting the important elective or extracurricular activities that already occur in some of these spaces—music, physical education, art and similar programs.
- ***Satellite learning centers*** – Adding satellite learning centers that would operate in conjunction with nearby schools should be explored. These satellite learning centers are already being used effectively to address overcrowding on primary campuses. One example is the United Teachers of Dade partnership with the Phyllis Ruth Miller elementary school in

Miami-Dade County. This satellite learning center already provides pre-k through 1st grade and expansion to 2nd and 3rd grade is expected in the 2003-04 school year.

- ***Prioritize and expedite permitting process*** – A working group modeled after the Election Reform Task Force should be assembled to provide immediate recommendations on prioritizing and expediting permits for new school construction while abiding by environmental and growth management regulations currently in place.
- ***Green light pending projects*** – The Legislature should immediately approve and release funds for pending plans by local school districts for additional school construction.

D. Accountability Measures

Florida voters demanded sweeping changes to our public education system in the last election. Voters expect to have accountability measures put in place to ensure the changes they voted for are carried out in good faith. Real accountability will require impartial oversight of the process.

Recommendations:

- ***Accountability measures*** – Amendment 9 will be a model for the nation, and we must prepare to lead by setting goals with clearly defined accountability measures. We agree with national class size reduction experts who stress accountability measures to evaluate class size implementation. Benchmarks and a timeline should be established at the onset of implementation to ensure the amendment is being implemented in the most effective way possible. We can learn from this experience from assessing trends in areas including test scores, retention rates, behavior, attendance, teacher satisfaction and parental involvement.

E. Revenue Options for Financing Amendment 9

Amendment 9 does not dictate a particular funding mechanism but does instruct the Legislature to make education a priority and requires legislators to determine responsible ways for funding smaller classes. In the original report that we co-authored last September, the Coalition to Reduce Class Size and People For the American Way offered a number of reasonable funding options for legislators to consider. Besides seeking ways to eliminate waste and inefficiencies, there are many ways for Florida to generate sufficient revenue without raising taxes on working families, increasing college tuition rates or cutting services that our seniors and children depend on.

Recommendations:

Legislation sponsored by then-state Senator Kendrick Meek to create a “Maximum Class Size Funding Commission” responsible for the fiscal administration of reducing class size passed the Florida Senate in 2002. We should build on this legislation to determine a stable source of funding for implementation. The previously adopted Senate language stated: “The commission may consider all potential revenue-generating options, except that a recommendation may not require a local funding source and may not require any supplantation of funds from existing programs or operations.” Local school districts are already overburdened and critical services provided by the state, such as the Bright Futures scholarships, need not be jeopardized to pay for class size reduction.

It is also important to note that part of Amendment 9's costs will be paid for through long-term financing. An investment bank that regularly participates in the state's bond issues estimates that the borrowing rate for AAA insured bonds would currently be around 5.15 percent. A rough estimate is that \$1 billion financed over 20 years would require about \$64 million in annual debt service; if financed over 30 years, the annual service on \$1 billion would be about \$76 million. Long-term financing of capital expenditures in fixed assets is routine because it has many advantages. It leverages available money to meet immediate needs; minimizes the effect on the annual budget by distributing construction costs over a period that matches the life of the facilities; and can avoid future increases in construction costs by allowing projects to be funded and built now.

To adequately fund Amendment 9, the Coalition to Reduce Class Size and People For the American Way specifically recommend review and consideration of these revenue-generating vehicles:

- ***Review and repeal of selected special-interest tax exemptions*** – As former Senate President John McKay has pointed out, every year the state collects an estimated \$17 billion in sales taxes, while exempting an estimated \$23 billion. While some of the exemptions are justifiable, too many are loopholes for special interests. Some of the most infamous exemptions include adult entertainment; ostrich feed and sports arena skyboxes in stadiums that are also tax exempt. Revenue from these outmoded and extravagant subsidies—such as the \$2 million every year for the Golf Hall of Fame—must be reviewed in light of our critical education needs. Last year, Advocates of Tax Reform not Budget Reduction, representing over 50 organizations, identified \$1.3 billion in annual revenue lost to the state from these types of special interest exemptions. Even Associated Industries of Florida, whose members benefit from many of these exemptions, proposed a legislative committee to review them.
- ***Reconsideration of corporate tax breaks*** – Another option for the Legislature to consider as a funding source would be repealing some of the corporate tax breaks that were enacted over the last four years. Over the implementation period of Amendment 9 these tax cuts will drain over \$20 billion from state coffers that benefit only the wealthiest 1-2 percent of Floridians. For example, the so-called Job Creation and Workforce Assistance Act (JCWAA) passed in 2002 will cost the state nearly \$430 million in revenue over the next four years.¹² In fact, in addition to freeing up hundreds of millions, if not billions, of dollars in funding to reduce class sizes, many believe that repealing this tax cut would actually boost the economy. The chief economist for the state's Office of Economic and Demographic Research testified before the Legislature that the JCWAA would cause Florida to *lose* both jobs and state revenue.¹³
- ***Prioritizing lottery revenues*** – As it explores funding options for Amendment 9, the Legislature should more closely examine how state lottery funds are being allocated and determine the lottery's impact on other state funding for education. The lottery, created in 1986, was promoted to voters with the understanding that lottery revenues would be *additional* funding for public schools. Several prominent groups and elected officials have raised legitimate concerns that lottery receipts have not gone to *enhance* spending but have simply replaced money that would normally have been allocated from general revenues. Legislators have a responsibility to use the lottery monies in the way they were originally intended.
- ***Other funding options*** – Newly elected Democratic leaders, Sen. Ron Klein and Rep. Doug Wiles, recently identified other funding options, including a recommendation by Gov. Jeb

Bush to bond against a telecommunications tax to produce \$2.8 billion. A portion of lottery revenues could also be bonded to produce as much as \$2.4 billion. Using the K-12 share of the Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO) program over the implementation period of Amendment 9 would yield another \$1.9 billion, and there is \$450 million available from the 1997 Classrooms First school bonding program.

V. The Process to Lead Us There

We believe the Legislature will benefit from inviting as much public testimony as possible. We commend Senate President Jim King for creating a Select Committee on Constitutional Amendment Implementation. Such a committee will benefit from the input of:

- ***Parents, teachers and local school officials*** – Parents know the debilitating effect that large class sizes have on their children's education. Teachers know that too many children are falling through the cracks due to overcrowded classrooms. We encourage the Legislature to hold hearings or town-hall meetings all across the state to allow citizens to offer their input.
- ***National experts*** – Florida is fortunate to have a head start when it comes to implementing class size reduction. Amendment 9 has been formally endorsed by education experts from the nation's leading class size reduction programs, including Tennessee's Project STAR and Wisconsin's SAGE program. These experts are eager to work with Florida to provide us with the benefit of their experience, sharing states' successes with class size reduction, as well as the lessons learned from these programs. There is also an abundance of resources and scientific studies available for the Legislature to analyze. We recommend a public meeting be scheduled to both hear from these experts and discuss the experience of class size reduction programs such as STAR and SAGE.
- ***Business leaders*** – The business men and women of Florida understand the direct connection between a quality educated workforce and economic growth. Florida Chamber of Commerce, for example, stressed in their recent Cornerstone report that class size reduction was a critical step toward improving Florida's education system and economy. The suggestions and ideas of those from the business community can help state officials successfully implement the class-size reduction initiative.

VI. Conclusion

Throughout the fall, Florida voters heard critics of Amendment 9 raise concerns about cost. In the end, the people spoke: Despite the significant cost of class-size reduction, Floridians firmly believed that this investment was not only urgently needed, but also affordable.

Recent financial data has demonstrated the wisdom of the voters in drawing this conclusion. Just recently, the state Board of Education projected that Amendment 9's first-year operational costs would be \$628 million. This is incredibly close to the \$625 million first-year estimate provided by the Legislature's Office of Economic and Demographic Research (EDR). Interestingly, EDR's eight-year estimated cost of \$4-12 billion was rejected by political appointees who settled on a much higher estimate that many observers criticized as inflated.

Yet, as state officials consider funding for Amendment 9, it is worth remembering that this initiative's long-term impact is likely to reduce costs in other areas. As the U.S. Department of Education has pointed out, the cost of class-size reduction "can be offset by the resulting decrease in within-grade retentions, reduced high school dropout rates, a diminished need for remedial instruction and long-term special education services, and increased teacher satisfaction and retention."¹⁴ Making needed investments in new classrooms will not only boost our state's economy in the short term, but also in the long term. When the Florida Senate voted in April of 2002 to support a class-size reduction amendment, these lawmakers put themselves on record behind the view that "investments in smaller class sizes lead to high student achievement and higher lifetime income and earning power."¹⁵

Amid a slow economy, Florida faces tough decisions. As voters went to the polls, they were well aware of the budgetary challenges our state was facing. Approving Amendment 9 was voters' way of informing their elected leaders that—even in this difficult environment—there is no higher priority than the children in Florida's public schools. For these voters, it is simply unthinkable, *regardless of the fiscal environment*, to allow our state to continue to admit more children to already overcrowded classrooms. It is simply unacceptable that Florida continue to rank 50th out of 50 states in per-capita education spending, condemning our children to the consequences of such funding deficiencies.

Fully and faithfully implementing Amendment 9 will enable Florida's leaders to remedy these problems and complete the mission set by the voters who elected them. This document serves as a tool for legislators and the governor to plot a course for implementing Amendment 9 appropriately.

The Coalition to Reduce Class Size and People For the American Way have made a commitment to voters to help ensure that the will expressed by Floridians on Nov. 5 is respected. Together, we will remain vigilant to help complete this mission, working cooperatively with elected officials from both parties. PFAW and the Coalition will help voters hold the Legislature and the governor accountable for implementing Amendment 9 in good faith.

APPENDIX A

Selected Resources on Class Size

Reports by **People For the American Way Foundation** address the positive impact of class-size reduction:

- *Two Roads to Reform: Comparing the Research on Vouchers and Class-Size Reduction* (May 2002) <http://www.pfaw.org/issues/education/reports/tworoads/>
- *Punishing Success: The Governor's Proposed Education Budget in Wisconsin and the SAGE and Voucher Programs* (April 2001) <http://www.pfaw.org/issues/education/reports/PunishingSuccess.pdf>

The **Tennessee STAR** study is a landmark study that reveals the powerful and lasting impact that smaller classes have on student achievement. These documents provide more information:

- Comprehensive information about the Tennessee STAR study, including research findings, data, fact sheets and bibliographies of supplemental analyses are available at <http://www.heros-inc.org/star.htm>.
- Elizabeth Word et al, *Project STAR Final Executive Summary Report, Kindergarten Through Third Grade, 1985-1989*, Tennessee State University, Department of Education, June 1990, available at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/classsize/eval/projstar.htm>.

Last school year, more than 81,000 students attended smaller classes, thanks to **Wisconsin's Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (SAGE)** program. These documents include annual evaluations and other reports on SAGE's positive impact on student learning:

- Comprehensive information about the SAGE initiative, including annual evaluations, reports and related publications can be accessed at <http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/CERAI/sage.html>.
- Alex Molnar et al, "2000-2001 Evaluation Results of the Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (SAGE) Program," Milwaukee, WI: Center for Education Research, Analysis, and Innovation, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, December 2001, available at <http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/CERAI/documents/sage/execsum01.htm>.

In 1998, Congress passed a law providing federal aid to assist public school districts across the country in reducing class sizes. A review by the **U.S. Department of Education** revealed the benefits that these reductions were having:

- "Class-Size Reduction: Myths and Realities," U.S. Department of Education, Sept. 3, 1999, available at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/ClassSize/myths.html>.

- Ivor Pritchard, *Reducing Class Size, What Do We Know*, National Institute on Student Achievement, Curriculum and Assessment, U.S. Department of Education, March 1999, available at <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/ReducingClass/title.html>.
- Jeremy D. Finn, *Class Size and Students at Risk: What is Known? What is Next*, National Institute on the Education of At-Risk Students, U.S. Department of Education, April 1998, available at <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/ClassSize/>.

Some **additional evaluations and analysis** examining the benefits of class size reduction on student achievement have been attached below:

- “Closing the Achievement Gap: Improving Educational Outcomes for African American Children,” National Black Caucus of State Legislators, November 2001, available at <http://www.nbcsl.com/news/pdf/cag.pdf>.
- Charles L. Thompson and Elizabeth K. Cunningham, “First in America Special Report: The Lessons of Class Size Reduction,” North Carolina Education Research Council, October 2001, available at http://www.firstinamerica.northcarolina.edu/reports/class_size.pdf.
- Alan B. Krueger and Diane M. Whitmore, *Would Smaller Classes Help Close the Black-White Achievement Gap?* Working Paper #451, Princeton University, Industrial Relations Section, March 2001, available at <http://www.irs.princeton.edu/pubs/pdfs/451.pdf>.

APPENDIX B

Florida's Amendment to Reduce Class Size

Article IX, Section 1, Florida Constitution, is amended to read:

Section 1. Public Education –

The education of children is a fundamental value to the people of the State of Florida. It is, therefore, a paramount duty of the State to make adequate provision for the education of all children residing within its borders. Adequate provision shall be made by law for a uniform, efficient, safe, secure, and high quality system of free public schools that allows students to obtain a high quality education and for the establishment, maintenance, and operation of institutions of higher learning and other public education programs that the needs of the people may require. **To assure that children attending public schools obtain a high quality education, the legislature shall make adequate provision to ensure that, by the beginning of the 2010 school year, there are a sufficient number of classrooms so that:**

1. **The maximum number of students who are assigned to each teacher, who is teaching in public school classrooms for prekindergarten through grade 3 does not exceed 18 students;**
2. **The maximum number of students who are assigned to each teacher who is teaching in public school classrooms for grades 4 through 8 does not exceed 22 students; and**
3. **The maximum number of students who are assigned to each teacher who is teaching in public school classrooms for grades 9 through 12 does not exceed 25 students.**

The class size requirements of this subsection do not apply to extracurricular classes. Payment of the costs associated with reducing class size to meet these requirements is the responsibility of the state and not of local school districts. Beginning with the 2003-2004 fiscal year, the legislature shall provide sufficient funds to reduce the average number of students in each classroom by at least two students per year, until the maximum number of students per classroom do not exceed the requirements of this subsection.

Ballot Summary

Proposes an amendment to the State Constitution to require that the Legislature provide funding for sufficient classrooms, so that there be a maximum number of students in public school classes for various grade levels; requires compliance by the beginning of the 2010 school year; requires the Legislature, and not local school districts, to pay for the costs associated with reduced class size; prescribes a schedule for phased-in funding to achieve the required maximum class size.

ENDNOTES

¹ “The Crisis,” an introduction to: *An Urgent Crisis, An Effective, Affordable Remedy*, September 2002, People For the American Way and the Coalition to Reduce Class Size, available at <http://www.pfaw.org/pfaw/general/default.aspx?oid=4213>.

² Election data is from: Florida Department of State, Division of Elections’ Web site at <http://election.dos.state.fl.us/elections/resultsarchive/Index.asp?ElectionDate=11/5/02&DATAMODE=>.

³ “Florida Charter Schools,” Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, accessed Jan. 24, 2003 at: www.miedresearchoffice.org/charterschools.htm.

⁴ Based on data from an Aug. 14, 2002 letter from Florida Education Secretary Jim Horne to State Sen. Kendrick Meek. According to Horne: “The Legislature has estimated the 10-year need for teachers to be approximately 160,000, without the approximately 32,000 additional teachers needed” under Amendment 9.

⁵ Based on data from an Aug. 14, 2002 letter from Florida Education Secretary Jim Horne to State Sen. Kendrick Meek. According to Horne: “The Legislature has estimated the 10-year need for teachers to be approximately 160,000, without the approximately 32,000 additional teachers needed” under Amendment 9.

⁶ Alan B. Krueger, “Smaller Classes Help Many,” *USA Today*, August 2, 2002, p. 8A.

⁷ The Class-Size Reduction Program: Boosting Student Achievement in Schools Across the Nation,” A First-Year Report, U.S. Department of Education, September 2000, p. 3.

⁸ *ibid*, p. 7.

⁹ Based on data from a March 2000 survey mailed to a list of 10,919 Floridians holding teaching certificates who were not working in a public school district. The survey was conducted by the Florida Office of Economic and Demographic Research, accessed via: <http://www.state.fl.us/edr/Conferences/Education/survey.htm>

¹⁰ Sam Yarger and Katherine Kasten, “Alternative Teacher Certification: A Position Paper,” Florida Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, adopted March 7, 2001, p. 8; accessible at: <http://pegasus.cc.ucf.edu/~facte/documents/altteacher.pdf>.

¹¹ Beatriz Chu Clewell and Ana María Villegas, “Absence Unexcused: Ending Teacher Shortages in High-Need Areas,” The Urban Institute, December 2001; the study is accessible at: <http://www.urban.org/education/absence-unexcused.html>.

¹² Memorandum to state Sen. Campbell from Ed Montanaro, director of the Office of Economic and Demographic Research, May 1, 2002.

¹³ *ibid*.

¹⁴ “Class-Size Reduction: Myths and Realities,” U.S. Department of Education, Sept. 3, 1999, accessed via: www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/ClassSize/myths.

¹⁵ Text from Senate amendment to the state education code (SB 2-D) on maximum class sizes, submitted and approved on April 3, 2002. Sponsors included Senators Holzendorf, Klein, Meek and Wasserman Schultz.